

SHINYA HASHIMOTO! and TENRYU! kill the hell out of each other. SHIMA NOBUNAGA! rules it in MP. ROYCE GRACIE! reigns supreme at Vale Tudo. STING! vs INOKI? CHEETAH MASTER! vs LANCE DIAMOND! vs RECKLESS YOUTH!

ALOHA~!

WELCOME TO THE DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #82!

It's gonna be a big week of endless tape reviewing so you may wanna print this momma out. Phil got all the Big Japan in the world from Billy and I got all the Big Japan in the world from LOREFICE and add that to the SUPER incredible tape GLENN! sent and you got the tip of the iceberg of TOTALLY ROPE GRAP ACTION VEIWING. WHIP ASS! We'd also like to give a big fat-ass welcome to King Of Shootstyle, Mike Naimark. He had the Kentucky Stick-fighting Handheld so he was DEFINATELY Death Valley Playboy material so he is our official Shootstyle reviewer boy. Give up the love. AWRIGHT! I now present to you... the man called Reverend Ray...

&*~*~*~* NEW JAPAN TV G-1 CLIMAX '98
(by REV.RAY)

The term "get all this" is often use by my fellow reviewer Dean-o Machino, and this is definitely the show that "Get all this!" applies to.

Yasuda vs Kojima:

[jip] It's Pete Stein's favorite midcard New Japan Heavyweight, Lurch Yasadu, against the man with the goofy hair, Satoshi Kojima. The crowd is pretty hot for this and the rest of the show. It's great as everytime someone hits someone, you see the sweat flying off them. It's real back and forth early, one guy takes control, hit a move, go for a follow up that usually misses. Yasuda misses an Avalanche, Kojima answers with a Diamond Cutter, he goes up top, Yasuda slams him off and gets in control for the frst time in the match of the show with the Sumo Slaps to the corner, Irish whip to the opposite corner, avalanche into the underhook suplex for two. Kojima counters a big boot and German suplexes Yasuda, hits the corner flying forearm and top rope elbow, as well as a top rope drop kick for twos. Kojima goes for the lariat but eats a fist or a clothesline from Yasuda. Yasuda hits a running neckbreaker drop, but Kojima blocks his Tiger driver. Kojima goes for another lariat, Yasuda with a drop kick and then the Tiger driver. Yasuda tries to go for Air Lurch, but Kojim catches him and hits a superplex, followed by a top rope rolling Senton body attack for two, follows it up with a top rope elbow for a two. Kojima puts him away with the lariat. Good match to rival the bizarrely good match Yasuda had with Tensan last year.

Kazou Yamazaki vs. Kensuki Sasaki:

Yamazaki attacks as the referee is doing his pre-match checks and goes to work on Sasaki's bad leg. Yamazaki tries to get in a Dragonscrew, but Sasaki hits him with forearms early, and then hits him with knees with his bad leg. He's more or less trying to show his leg is not in bad

shape and starts round kicking Yamazaki, which is a mistake, because Kazou catches the leg and hits the Dragonscrew and then goes for a figure four. Sasaki kicks him off and it's pretty obvious the leg is hurting him. Yamazaki tries to go after the arm, but Sasaki powers him off. Yamazaki with a high round kick and then goes after the leg. The crowd seems to be chanting something along with each of Yamazaki's kicks, but I can't figure it out. Sasaki catches a kick, but gets nailed with an enzugiri, Yamazaki goes for a leg lariat, but Sasaki catches him and suplexes him. Sasaki hits a lot of knee's with the bad leg on Yamazaki. Sasaki hits a powerslam and gets in Strangle Hold Gamma, but he has to let it go as his knee gives out. Kazou keeps up the kicks, Sasaki tries to fight him off, but Yamazaki hits another Dragonscrew and applies a leg scissor to score the win. Hey, someone got their Undertaker tapes in the mail.

Masahiro Chono vs Shiro Koshinaka:

Joined in progress, Shiro has the Dragonsleeper on Chono, but Chono escapes with knees to the head. Chono does a number of mean nasty things to Shiro's knees on the railing, throws him in and continues. Shiro punches him off and hits an enzugiri. They struggle to gain control, Shiro hits one hip attack, goes for a second, but Chono counters by ducking low and more or less clipping Shiro out of the air. Chono goes back to the legs with a sort of figure four/indian death lock move until going to the Tieoh Lock. Shiro rope saves, Chono hits the top rope shoulder tackle followed by an STF. Chono climbs up the ropes again, but Shiro shoves Tiger Hitori into the ropes, causing Chono to crotch himself. Shiro gives Chono the Doug Furnas power hoist off the top rope followed by a powerbomb and the top rope hip attack and another powerbomb for two. Yet another powerbomb and Shiro slaps on the clover leaf twice. Shiro gets low blowed to block a dragon suplex. Shiro catches him backslide for two. Chono takes over with a yakuza kick and leg lariat. He puts on the Tieoh lock, but Shiro hands on. The nWo-ites distract the ref, Chono hits him with a real dickish low blow and puts him away with the Tieoh Lock.

Tenryu vs. Shinya Hashimoto:

You want all this? YOU NEED ALL THIS! Stiffness? We got some of that. Tenryu and Hash decide to have a match where they chop each other until one of them wets themselves. It's a 9.5 on the Flair chest reddening scale (a ten would be drawing blood like Flair/Sting from the first Clash of the Champions). Be bedazzled by Hashimoto's Ode to Pete Townsend Gargantuan Windmill Chops of Pain! You'll wet YOURSELF as you watch Tenryu dive FACE FUCKING FIRST into a Hashimoto leg lariat! Psycosis would even say NO to that bump. Tenryu gets dumped on his head off the second rope via a DDT as well. It ain't fancy, it's two guys beating each other's asses, your ass, my ass and the people down the street's asses. And what else do you want?

!@!@!@! MICHINOKU LUCHA TV #11- 8/15/98.
(byDEAN RASMUSSEN)

This was more SWANK than good because this is ALLL about the Groupo Revolution invading the undercard and these guys are really great for ROOKIES but just really good as

WRESTLERS. We have a future Fullblown Star in Shima Nobunaga- who is on the verge of becoming the coolest megadick heel to come down the pike since Koji Kanemoto decided that he hated everything. This was great Japanese debut and I hope the Michinoku Pro/Groupo relationship continues because Groupo will eventually save MPÕs bacon if they keep it together. HELL, Fuji, Suwa and Nobunaga ALREADY have the greatest group name in the history of wrestling- yes, they are called CRAZY MAX.

Hoshikawa/ Fujita/ Seno vs Shima Nobunaga/ Sumo Fuji/ Judo Suwa:

PseudoShootBoy and future MP saving-grace Hoshikawa kicks the New Kids In The Ring REEEAL hard and the three youngsters who have escaped the clutches of WCW WorldWide for a few weeks do their best Kaientai Deluxe impersonation- down to the TOGO surfer pose- but HEY! they aren't Dick Togo, Shiryu and TAKA fuckin Michinoku so they can't be Total Dicks At The Speed Of Light like their MP bastard predecessors, so it's lot more methodical and pedestrian, but it's still pretty cool compared to everything else in wrestling. Not That Big Japan Boy But Just As Scrawny Fujita has a neat offense because it always seems to be about one foot too low on every highspot (I missed the New Japan cut by four inches on my vertical leap! DAMMIT ALL TO HELL!!) Seno is quite the trainee and Dick Togo ain't there to train'em anymore. He takes a beating like a man though. The coolest parts are when Nobunaga and Hoshikawa are in together because Nobunaga isn't afraid to get kicked right in the face for Your Pleasure. And, yes, you find it pleasing.... The WCW guys cheat like total bastards, putting a really hurty triple headscape assault that one would have to see. They have a neat highspot train with the Groupo guys stealing every highspot they could remember from Nitro and the MP guys going old school Lucha with the straight topes. They do cool things and goofy things until the final TOTALLY BEAUTIFUL Shima Nobunaga Love Machine Splash and the crowd is perfectly appalled. Shima hops on the mike and says something to the effect of "Eat my butt, you jerks." This was great.

- CRAZY MAX highlights ensue with more cool Love Machine Splashes, Seno and Fujita getting punked four ways to Tuesday and Sumo Fuji applying the- AM I SEEING THIS RIGHT?!?- the CLAW!(!)?!

Shima Nobunaga vs Seno:

Seno is actually kinda neat, if not actually good. He FEARLESSLY uses the little-known and little-used move that he stole from Ronnie Twist- late of the Gone but NEVER forgotten AWF- the Airplane Spin Somoan Drop. He also hits an extra-nasty released German suplex that Nobunaga takes right on the head. Nobunaga goes all lucha on his ass by reminding Seno that he had learned some wacky submissions while in Mexico City. Shima then does a flying spinning kick right to Seno's face- and we are all very pleased. Victory is a Love Machine splash away. I forgive Seno's Argentine Backbreaker and can thus say this is an okay little match.

Hoshikawa/ Yakushiji vs Sumo Fuji/ Judo Suwa:

This is real good for a large portion of the match and it also mixes in a few truly wretched passages. Yakushiji isn't afraid to really suck at times and Sumo Fuji isn't afraid to suck a whole lot at times. Other than the two minutes of Hoshikawa and Yakushiji blowing absolutely

everything and Sumo Fuji trying to get Our Boy Hoshikawa to sell a frickin Claw, this was quite the highspeed little escapade with the show being stolen by a TOTALLY Dick-like performance by Shima Nobunaga who stands around at ringside cheating like an absolute motherfucker. Yakushiji does a fantabulous tope that kills the hell out of Sumo who had just hit a 1/8th DiBiase Powerslam. Judo Suwa is superterrific in this as he hits some cool mid-grade powermoves and does the IMPOSSIBLE of making Yakushiji look almost THREATENING. Hoshikawa kills the hell out of Sumo with one of his Phat Ass Northern Light Suplexes that Yakushiji follows up with his own new finisher (the Official Everybody In Japan Japanese Finisher of 1998) Fisherman-Buster Suplex. Shima and the boys do their Not Ready For The US tagline: a crotch-chop while shouting "FUCK YOU (something)." I loved a large wad of this.

Gran Hamada vs The Convict:

The Convict is the super great and super fat as all hell Superboy, and Gran Hamada is the coolest Senior Citizen since Roy Orbison. This is a basic old guy lucha match with nothing too spectacular- THEN the Convict whips out the 700 pound moonsault and the Meatloaf: Bat-out-of-Hell Senton, which leads up to Hamada hitting the coolest Swinging DDT on this Island Earth. In one of the Bust-A-Gut and Lie-On-The-Floor Laughing moments of 1998, the Lil Convict comes out and attacks Hamada. The Lil Convict is Flying Kid Hachikari and it looks like Superboy and his son went Trick-or-Treating dressed as the Convict. I was waiting for a twelve year in little black pants and a Freddy Fender wig to make the save. MP is getting REALLY weird in their quest to import invading heels to fill the gaping KDX void. I'd stick with Shima Nobunaga and the boys...

Great Sasuke/ Yakushiji vs Super Delfin/ Yone Genjin:

This is an okay little heatless affair that is really cool because it's the Great Sasuke's return to the ring and I think he's a great wrestler. It pretty non-decript until the highspots start kicking in, except for the everpresent Yone Genjin blowing a Sasuke rana that Juventud Guerrerra was hitting perfectly when he was eleven years old, wrestling as El Mathematicocito IV. Yakushiji and Sasuke hit the truly swank double opposite corner- turnbuckle topes. Delfin spiritedly goes through the motions as not even Sasuke's return can inspire him to do anything but mail it in a little less. Sasuke tries a Tope Con Hilo and Delfin's is WAAAAY out of position and Sasuke lands reeeeeaaaal nasty on his shoulder. Genjin has this great look of "Oh GREAT! King Dipshit's killed himself and destroyed our jobs AGAIN!" and goes for the finish on Yakushiji. Postmatch, the announcers theismen the holy hell out of the landing and I had to love that. Get this tape for the Shima Nobunaga Unbelievably-A-Rookie Goodness.

%%\$%%\$%%\$%%\$ NEW JAPAN COMMERCIAL TAPE- 1/4/1995 Tokyo Dome Show:
(byPHIL SCHNEIDER)

Quite the mixed bag, as these shows often are. Some real crap, but some hidden gems too. Shinjiro Ohtani vs El Samurai: Sort of a basic New Japan Juniors by-the-numbers match. Tope here, top rope rana there, German suplex over here etc. Nothing about this match was particularly eventful and all 62,500 people were pretty much silent. This was before NJ Juniors

got all skullcrushing but after it had stopped being highflying so it just kind of mucked around looking for a style. Not a bad match but nothing you really need to see.

Norio Honaga vs The Great Sasuke:

Not very good at all. Honaga wrestles exactly like "Hangman" Bobby Jagers, dutifully working on the arm during his whole offensive sequence. Busting out the super Mid South offense, armdrag and twist, armwringer, hammerlock, knee on the elbow, armbar. This didn't really set anything up, it appeared just to kill time. Sasuke spent most of the match selling, and then got a little offense in, including only a single tope-con-hilo. Now I have seen the Great Sasuke hit half a dozen insane skull crushing highspots in a junior high school gym in Iwate in front of 85 people, but then he tones it down for the 60,000 + in the Tokyo dome. Honaga gets the win after he raises his knees during a Sasuke moonsault and hits an Oklahoma roll. In the spectrum of all wrestling this wasn't bad, but in the subset of Japanese juniors matches it was pretty wretched.

Akitoshi Saito/ Kuniaki Kobayash/ The Great Kabuki vs Akira Nogami/ Takayuki Iizuka/ Osamu Kido:

On paper this match has whisky barrel of suck written all over it. I mean you have the ossified Great Kabuki standing right there with two non-Koshinaka members of Heisei Ishingun. But this match was surprisingly not horrible, Kido does some old man mat wrestling, Saito kicks hard, Nogami and Iizuka (aka JJ Jacks) do every Southern Rockers double team and everyone else stays out of the way.

Koji Kanemoto vs Yuji Nagata:

This match rocked the house. It was kind of like an incubatory BattlARTS match. With both guys kicking the shit out of each other and working shootstyle on the mat. Koji was in pre-dick mode but he still kicked Nagata right in the face, Koji also hit an awesome key wrist lock counter of a bridged German suplex. The only thing that kept this from ascending to wrestling paradise is the ending. Koji in midair realizes, "Hey! I can't actually do a Shooting Star Press can I?", as he doesn't get full rotation and lands right on his neck barely touching Nagata, but still gets the pin. Everything but that 30 seconds ruled it, and this is one of the few must see matches on this card.

Hiroyoshi Tenzan vs Manabu Nakanishi:

Both these guys are spotty and underachieving now, this match was more than three years ago. Tenzan was clean shaven and sort of wholesome looking (although he still had his worldclass bad hair) and Nakanishi had yet to start mainlining High Voltage's urine, so he looked less like a biology experiment. This match was basically a lot of sloppy powermoves, including Tenzan hitting an Owen Hart Work the Smarts piledriver, and a pretty good powerbomb. This wasn't horrible, but it sure wasn't good. Tenzan wins with a fallaway slam. Aahh... the mixed bag that is NJ Heavyweights.

Tiger Jeet Singh/ Tiger Ali Singh vs Shiro Koshinaka/ Michiyoshi Ohara:

I hate Tiger Jeet Singh more than any other wrestler in the world- more than The Shat Ernest Miller, more than THE MONSTER MENG, more than even Shark Tsuchiya. Singh does nothing,

refuses to take bumps, spotlight hogs, and is a con man and criminal. Fuck him and his degenerate no-talent son. This match was worse than the worst ECW brawl, they wander around and hit each other with umbrellas. Then they get in the ring a Jeet gives Ohara the tongan death grip. Heinously bad, Ali had the Marty Janetty tights on too, damn the lax Canadian real estate fraud laws.

Sting vs Tony Palmore:

This is part the first round of the BVD Martial Arts tournament, which is an appropriate name because it stunk like dirty underwear. Tony Palmore is a fat black guy with an NWA-era Icecube jheri curl, he is evidentially a kick boxer, although he looks like a short order cook. Sting is renowned Martial Artist Steve Borden. This basically consisted of Palmore throwing some poorly pulled punches, until Sting pushes him over and puts on the Scorpion Deathlock (which is how Royce Gracie won his first UFC if I am not mistaken). This was as bad as it sounds.

Antonio Inoki vs Gerard Gordeau:

This match is another in a long tradition of the egomaniacal Inoki forcing legit fighters to job to his decrepid ass. Gordeau is a seedy Belgiun guy with tatoos, who threw a lot of gentle kicks until Inoki caught one and reversed it into a choke. Not as horrible as the Sting match, because Inoki was at least making a half assed attempt to work the style, still mind numbingly bad.

Riki Choshu/ Yoshiaki Yatsu vs Kengo Kimura/ Tatsutoshi Goto:

There is assuredly a long, shoot kick, eyeglass company, gambling debt, Olympic boycott, legit heat in the back, booking swerve, "I'm not a dog that lets you bite myself", Restruction Force, Japan Pro-Wrestling, Heisei Ishingun, "If you can't beat me tonight, then you know you'll never be able to beat me" Social Progress Pro Wrestling-intensive explanation for why this match is historically compelling. However, all I see is four really crappy old guys. When your best worker is the lesser member of the Freedom Dogs, you are deep into it, Jack

Sabu/ Masa Chono vs Tatsumi Fujinami/ Junji Hirata:

Chono and Hirata do the big New Japan no-sell. Sabu does all of his preposterous spots, including a big long table spot which forces Hirata to lie there like a tool. Fujinami and Sabu take it to the mat. Sabu hit some lame chair shots; Chono doesn't have his cool shades; take a pass on this match unless you are a Sabu completist.

Road Warrior Hawk vs Scott Norton:

Not as bad as it could have been. It was still awful, but at least both guys sold, and Norton took a bump. They have a goofy screwjobish ending. This match would have been FF material on Nitro, and it looked real out of place at the Dome. Hawk is the crown prince of puss.

Antonio Inoki vs Sting:

Every single match on this tape was complete and uncut, they showed every stomach churning second of Singh/ Singh vs Koshinaka/ Ohara, however this match- which was the co-main event- got clipped from 10 minutes down to 2. I can only imagine how horrible, how horrendous,

how business exposing this battle of the sucksters must have been. Unfortunately we will never now the extent of the incompetence, they have spared us that.

Hiro Hase/ Keiji Mutoh vs Rick and Scott Steiner:

Probably the last watchable Steiner brother match before the descent in to the swamp of suck the are currently mired in. Scott Steiner was in the middle of his decline from great innovative worker to steroid soaked circus freak, but he was not yet too inflated to do stuff. Kenji Mutoh showed up to work, and Hiroshi Hase is the holy grail, the man that can spin straw into gold. The middle portion meandered after a neat amateur wrestling start. They kicked up for the end as Hase and Mutoh kept reversing the Steiners big moves, as Hase hits a victory roll out the set up for the top rope DDT, and Mutoh reverse a Steiner Square Driver into a tombstone. The Steiners hit some big released German and Dragon Suplexes, and Hase and Mutoh get the duke as Mutoh does the Shiryu German suplex flip out and hits a drop kick into a Hase Northern Lights Suplex for the win. Damn good, and another miracle to add on to Hase's application for wrestling Sainthood.

Shinya Hashimoto vs Kensuke Sasaki:

Kensuke Sasaki is basically New Japan's version of Kenta Kobashi- a physically talented worker who can be carried to greatness by superb workers, who can reign in his worse tendencies (no-selling in both of them) but who isn't afraid to suck when in with equally undisciplined wrestlers (there are less great workers and more undisciplined wrestlers in New Japan than in All Japan, that is why Kobashi's canon of matches is so much better). Hashimoto is New Japan's Kawada- insanely stiff, disciplined, can pull good matches out of shit workers, and pull great matches out of pretty good workers. This match was a prime example of Hashimoto's talent. It was one of the best New Japan Heavyweight matches I have ever seen. Both guys worked really stiff and it had great moves and psychology. Both guys worked for submissions, Sasaki wanted to cinch his Stranglehold Gama, and Hashimoto wanted to wear down the arm for the cross armbreaker. They started by both punting each other, with Sasaki busting up Hashimoto's nose early. Hashimoto starts to work on the arm by breaking Sasaki's lariat attempt with a elbow right to the arm, he also hits a modified belly to belly which lands Sasaki right on his shoulder. Sasaki hits powermoves to set up the stranglehold, which Hashimoto is able to roll out of, the end comes with Hashimoto escaping the Gamma for the third time, and hitting a nasty flying spin kick (which is really impressive looking considering how fat ((and phat)) Hashimoto is) and then dropping Sasaki right on his head with the Fisherman's Buster. I would have like to see an arm submission be used for the finish, because that is what Hashimoto seemed to be working for, but that is a small quibble. YOU WANT CERTAIN PARTS OF THIS.

@\$@\$@\$ THE SECOND ANNUAL EDDIE GILBERT MEMORIAL BRAWL- 4/12/97
(by PHIL RIPPA)

Be prepared for some hits and a whole bunch of misses. RIP Eddie.

The Inferno Kid/"Surfer" Ray Odyssey vs The Downward Spiral:

The Downward Spiral consists of Twiggy Ramirez and Exotic Adrian Hall. The Inferno Kid and Ray Odyssey are... well.... the Inferno Kid and Ray Odyssey. It is nice to see that Odyssey, who I had not seen since his really horrible matches in Herb Abram's UWF, had not improved at all. This match is also before the Inferno Kid blew out his knee and he still ain't good. It is really difficult to figure out which is more disturbing, the gothic Marilyn Manson thing that the Downward Spiral is going for or watching these four wrestle. Somehow Odyssey manages to get his fat ass over the top rope for a pescata. Did I mention that this was a NWA Tag Title match? Yup, one of these teams is still going to be the champs by the end of the night. Imagine that. Fast Forwarding to the end, literally and figuratively, the Inferno Kid hits a missile dropkick that is slightly better than the one Odyssey had just hit to pin Ramirez. The Brothers East LA- whoever the hell they are- jump the Beach Bullies in an angle exactly similar to the Gangsters/Public Enemy angle right down to the announcer going on about how they don't even wrestle in the NWA. Glad to see that Dennis Corlouzzo can come up with some original ideas.

Steve Corino vs Mr. Puerto Rico:

Mr. Puerto Rico has some name that I can't quite catch, Ralph something. It really doesn't matter though. Mr. Puerto Rico has just gotten his degree in "How to shrink his testicles" from the Scott Steiner College of Steroid Abuse. Mr. Puerto Rico can barely walk so wrestling is out of the question. The match is short and very painful.

The Black Scorpion vs. Donnie B.:

There is so much bizarreness surrounding this match it is going to take me awhile to explain this. First of all, the basis of this match is that Donnie B. is a manager. He used to manage Rick Ratchet. They wrestled a loser-must-retain-match. Ratchet lost. If Donnie B. loses this match then Ratchet can come back. Got That? Okay, then let me explain this. The Black Scorpion is Ratchet. Just picture a really bad Midnight Rider. Or maybe a really bad Yellow Dog. Anyway, this is really bad. That is what you need to know for the match. The nonsense doesn't end there though. They first try to get over that the Black Scorpion might be Ric Flair. Nevermind that the guy wearing the costume is like 4'3" and weighs 20 pounds. Okay, then Tommy Corlouzzo gets on "the stick" and says that the Black Scorpion just got back from New Japan. So the announcer spends time rattling off the entire New Japan roster as to who might be under the mask. I am not making any of this up. The match is really bad and has a horrible ending since Donnie B. rips off Ratchet's Black Scorpion outfit but never notices that he has his regular tights on underneath them. Doesn't see the Big RICK RATCHET written right across the front. Oh boy. After like 10 minutes of trying, the Black Scorpion loads his mask and gets the win. There you go.

Ian Rotten vs Tommy Gilbert

Oh God, this can't possibly be good. And it's not because- I guess in tribute to Eddie- these two decide to take it to the mat. IAN ROTTEN TAKES IT TO THE MAT. It's like when Tommy Dreamer's grandfather died so in homage there was a spurt where all the wrestlers would WRESTLE Tommy Dreamer. So if you thought it couldn't get worse than seeing New Jack supply a hip-toss, wait to you see Ian Rotten try to credibly apply an armbar. This goes on for awhile. A real long time. A really really long time. I think we might have ceded more land from

Mexico. I lost my patience after about 12 minutes and I have watched a big batch of bad wrestling recently that I didn't fast forward through, but I had to fast forward through the rest of the match. I think I saw Gilbert win with a spinning toe-hold but it could have been both guys having seizures. I wasn't stopping to find out.

"Dirty" Don Montoya vs King Kong Bundy:

Montoya is a decent fat guy. You just have to watch his feud with Reckless Youth to see some fatty goodness but he is in the ring with Bundy who is a really fat old guy who still can't wrestle. Next.

Reckless Youth vs Lance Diamond vs The Cheetah Master:

After all that garbage, I was dying for some wrestling. And my lord delivered, as he gives me this Triangle Match for the North American Heavyweight title. I am a huge Reckless Youth fan but it is hard not to love one of the best Indy wrestlers around. With Diamond you never know what you are going to get- but in this case you get the inspired, hard-working Lance Diamond. Cheetah Master is quite carryable and can supply some flashes like his no-hands plancha that he entered the match with. The pace and flow of the match worked as there is almost no lack of action with two guys wrestling while the third catches a breather. There is zero rest holds with a big batch of funky double team moves. Youth brings his whole bag of aerial moves with him including a giant quebrada, a slightshot sommersault plancha, and his really big moonsault. Everyone bumped and sold in great quantities which you can never be upset about. There was some nonsense as there was too much of preventing someone from pinning someone so you can pin them instead which makes absolutely no sense when it is an elimination match. Plus there was too much Royce Profit and Miss Patricia. Anyway, Cheetah Master gets eliminated first, as he should when Youth does a version of the face front DDT, kinda like Edge's Downward Spiral only Cheetah Master lands right on top of his head. Hey! look at that. Diamond and Youth work a couple more minutes with Diamond kicking out of Youth's Art Barr level Frog Splash. The end is really goofy and out of nowhere as Diamond does a sloppy La Magistrel for the win. Oh well, there is way too much good to focus on the bad.

Dory Funk Jr. vs. Dan Severn

This is for the NWA Heavyweight Title. Gotta love the fact that Severn is running rough shot over all these Japanese wrestlers yet wrestles to a draw with the 400 year old Dory Funk Jr. I really had no patience for this match, especially after watching Ian Rotten and Tommy Gilbert wrestle the exact match an hour ago.

Buddy Landell vs. Doug Gilbert - Street Fight

Jim Cornette and Dawn Marie are with Landell and in light of recent events (ie: an MCW show) they are not on my good side. It is an average street fight meaning the prerequisite chairs and tables. Landell does the mildest of blade jobs that I have ever seen. He bleeds for like twenty seconds and that is it. Meanwhile, Gilbert in a tribute to both his brother and himself does a king-sized blade job. Gilbert and Landell decide to introduce themselves to the crowd as they wander through every part of the arena. They don't do anything just wander around for long periods of time. For some unknown reason they get back in the ring. Look. Cornette is on the

ring apron. Could be a match with Cornette that has a screwy ending? No, that can't be. Gilbert wins after Landell and Cornette get their signals crossed. Yeah, yea for screwjobs. Did I mention that Gilbert was bleeding.

Ace Darling vs Flash Funk

Scorpio is in full Flash Funk mode. Fur coat, fedora, those big ass boots. Either way, he can still wrestle. I have no problems with Ace Darling. So this match has a whole lot of potential. Now for the third time on the evening, there is a ton of mat wrestling but the big difference is that it works with these two. You have to love the elaborate take downs that appear out of nowhere. They're not supreme lucha moves but that is some influence and it is definitely watchable. The camera work gets a little shoddy at times but you can make out the point where Darling catches his head on the ring apron during a plancha. Ouch. The two trade near falls. I personally like the Funk 360 leg drop. There is this one big problem with this match. That is Buddy Landell. For whatever reason, Landell comes down and interferes and helps Funk get the win. Funk and Darling then punk Landell. Hey! give him one for me.

Goldust vs. Derek Domino:

Who did Eddie Gilbert piss off before he died to get this as the main event for a tribute card for himself? I have no love for Dustin Runnels in any incarnation. This would not be the match that I would be shelling out money for. For me, seeing Runnels bloated no-talent ass in face paint in some transexual gimmick is not making me rush out of my house. But for the rubes, it is a big name so what the hell do I know?

@#@#@#@# JAPAN VALE TUDO OPEN 1994 (by Mike NAIMARK)

(Welcome to my first article written for the esteemed and damn-near legendary Death Valley Driver Video Review. Come with me now to the land where huracanranas and tope-con-hilos give way to rear naked chokes, ankle picks, and good old-fashioned fists to the face. And lets face it, any sport where Hulk Hogan couldn't even contend for the women's title can't be all bad, could it?)

In 1994, Japan has a respectable history of submissions fighting and limited-rules mixed-martial- arts events. This event, however, marked the first fully-sanctioned no-holds-barred (NHB) tournament in Japan. The event itself was arranged and promoted by Yori Nakamura and Satoru Sayama (a name which might have been mentioned in this publication before, I'd wager). True to the tradition of Japanese combat events, the promoters spared no expense in insuring that the production values of this show rivaled those of any heavyweight boxing championship. But the big attraction here is the Japanese debut of the man who is probably the biggest legend in the world of NHB, the undefeated Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu master, Rickson Gracie. The event is an 8-man tournament held inside a boxing-style ring, with a hard textured mat. Each fight consists of two 8-minute rounds, and the fight can only end in one of three ways: Knockout (count of 10 if standing), Submission (ie "tap out"), and Corner

throwing in the towel. All techniques are legal except biting, eye gouging, and headbutts. All fighters must wear "grapple gloves", slightly padded fingerless gloves that are mainly used to protect the hands of the fighters. I have a pair, and they won't protect *anybody's* face from damage, believe me!

Bud Smith (195lbs, USA kickboxer) vs Chris Bass (225lbs, France karate):

Two stand-up strikers demonstrating their similar, yet different techniques. Karate has the tradition and mystical reputation, while kickboxing has the American-style boxing training supplemented by karate and muay-thai kicking techniques. Both men circle each other cautiously, but when Smith stops and circles to his left, Bass foolishly does the same, and walks right into a straight right hand that everybody in the arena saw coming. Bass hits the canvas, wondering why his sensei never told him not to circle into your opponent's power hand. Must've missed that kata. The ref counts to 8, and Bass gets to his feet, looking visibly shaken. When the fight restarts, Smith immediately charges in and clobbers Bass with another wicked right hand that sends the Frenchman sprawling and opens up a nasty cut under his left eye. The ref could've counted to 100. Here's a lesson for all you dojo queens out there: all the qi and katas and mystical bullshit in the world won't protect your face from a right cross. Your winner in a mere 56 seconds, Bud Smith.

Kenji Kanaguchi (178lbs Japan, shooto) vs Jan Lomulder (183lbs, France, karate):

Lomulder is announced as being the World Karate Council (WKC) light-heavyweight champion, which means he probably has enough in-ring experience to avoid the fate of the last French karate master to fight tonight. Kanaguchi's style is shooto, or shoot fighting, which combines submissions grappling with limited striking techniques. Since karate has almost no emphasis on groundfighting, Kanaguchi decides that his best move would be to take Lomulder to the ground, where he can't kick or punch effectively. So as soon as the fight starts, Kanaguchi charges across the ring and shoots for a single-leg takedown. Lomulder saw it coming, though, and manages to hop back to the ropes for support before hammering the back of Kanaguchi's head with a series of rights and lefts. Kanaguchi finally manages to unbalance Lomulder and take him down, but the Frenchman prevents him from getting an advantageous position and starts throwing some vicious rabbit punches (punches to the back of the neck, illegal in boxing) that force Kanaguchi to roll out of the ring. Normally when this happens, the referee moves the fighter in the ring to the far side to allow the other fighter to re-enter. This referee, probably borrowed from a local pro-wrestling promotion, allows Lomulder to stand right where he was, and when Kanaguchi tries to crawl under the bottom rope, Lomulder wacks him in the face with a couple of whip kicks and a stomp. Oh, NOW the referee asks Lomulder to move. On the restart, Kanaguchi again goes for the legs, but Lomulder keeps his balance and lands half-a-dozen nasty elbow strikes to the back of the head. Kanaguchi is down! But Lomulder ain't through! Some stomps to the skull and a kick to the face knock him out of the ring. ITS A KNOCKOUT! Lomulder celebrates in his corner! BUT WAIT! The referee is allowing Kanaguchi to get to his feet and continue the fight! Lomulder grudgingly moves in for the kill. He hits a straight left hand lead, a muay-thai kick to the knee, and a sharp right hand, and Kanaguchi is down again, and now he's bleeding from above his left eye. You'd think he was toast, but as the Frenchman moves in for another stomp to the cranium, Kanaguchi grabs his lead leg and rolls

around for a kneebar! This is the position he's wanted to be in all night! If he can lock out the knee, Lomulder is history! Well, he can't. Lomulder pulls himself to his feet and kicks Kanaguchi right in the face while he's on the ground, and the referee stops the fight. The Frenchman has won! Perhaps all of the French aren't beret-wearing, baguette-scarfing pansy boys after all!

Dave Levecki (291lbs USA WingChun) v Kazuhiro Kisayamagi (168lbs, JP, shooto):

Levecki is huge. Kisayamagi could easily pass for TAKA Michonoku's wicked clone. In fact, the resemblance is sorta disquieting. Levecki represents Wing Chun, the legendary Kung Fu of mystical monks who shoot fireballs and can float. Kisayama is probably thinking, "Hey, this kung-fu guy never practiced grappling! My shoot fighting submissions will make him squeal like a whipped dog!" What he SHOULD have been thinking was, "Geez, this guy is HUGE!"

Kisayama shoots right in for a double-leg takedown, and Levecki proceeds to beat the living tar out of the back of his head. Kisayama goes down to the canvas, and Levecki follows him with several more crushing right hands to the head. Thanks for showing up, kid. Here's your t-shirt. Winner by KO, Dave Levecki.

Yoshinori Nishi (175lbs, Japan, JiuJitsu) v Rickson Gracie (185lbs Brazil, GJJ):

Nishi is something of a martial arts legend in Japanese JiuJitsu circles. While the flashy style of karate and kung-fu captured the fancy of the martial arts community in the 70s and 80s, Nishi proudly carried the banner of the Japanese submissions art, JiuJitsu. But despite his status in Japan, Rickson Gracie is the man that everyone came to see. Rickson Gracie represents not only his family technique of Gracie Jiu Jitsu, originated by his father Helio, but also the legendary Gracie record in no-holds-barred. No member of the Gracie family has lost a no-rules match in over 40 years, and Rickson himself comes to the ring with a proclaimed record of over 300 victories with not a single defeat (by comparison, Ken Shamrock holds a NHB record of 6-2-2. Most Dangerous Man my Aunt Fannie). Rickson starts the match with a tried-and-true technique that you'll see in most Gracie matches; circling and throwing sharp front-leg kicks that are designed not to injure the opponent, but to distract him for the shoot. True to form, Nishi lifts his lead leg to block the kick, and Rickson immediately dives in and grabs a waistlock before dragging Nishi to the ground. Rickson is on top of Nishi, and Nishi has him in the "half-guard" defensive position, which keeps Rickson from "mounting" him (ie sitting on his chest). Rickson is patient, however, and peppers Nishi's kidneys and ribs with sharp right hands. A moment of weakness, and Rickson works his leg free and gets the full mount, the second most dominant position in fighting! Nishi immediately flips over on to his stomach to avoid a rain of blows to his face, and now he's given Rickson his back, the MOST DOMINATING position in fighting. Rickson ain't gonna blow a chance like this. After a few punches to the back of the head, Rickson sinks in a rear-naked choke, and Nishi taps. Rickson just took out one of the most respected JiuJitsu teachers in Japan, and made it look easy. Winner - Rickson Gracie

Bud Smith vs Jan Lomulder:

(Semi-final) It is announced that Lomulder has withdrawn due to a broken bone in his hand. There are no alternate fighters in this tournament. Bud Smith advances. Maybe the French ain't so tough after all.

Dave Levecki vs Rickson Gracie:

(Semi-final) Somehow, Levecki has managed to break a bone in his hand, too, but will continue. I don't doubt that after Lomulder withdrew, the promoters waved a few extra yen at Levecki to tough it out. Like a predatory animal, Rickson can smell the weakness of his foe, and goes right to work. Rickson waistlocks Levecki, and to escape, Levecki dives out of the ring and hits the floor hard. He's very slow getting up, and doesn't look like he wants to fight. Rickson circles and jabs, waiting for Levecki to unbalance himself. When Levecki attempts a counterpunch, Rickson shoots in with a double-leg and takes him down right into the mounted position. Levecki flips over to his stomach to avoid being punches in the face, by Rickson simply punches the back of his head. *Hard*. And often. Levecki wisely taps after absorbing way too much punishment. Winner - Rickson Gracie.

Bud Smith vs Rickson Gracie:

(The Final) Bud Smith might as well be fighting an army. After he throws one pathetic leg kick, Rickson takes him right to the mat, attains the mount, and beats the shit out of Bud until he taps. THIS Bud got smoked. Winner - Rickson Gracie After the tournament, Rickson is presented with a check for 5 million Yen. Quote: "I am not confident about myself. I am confident in Gracie Jiu Jitsu."

BIG JAPAN TV.10/31/97
(byDEAN RASMUSSEN)

SUE ME. I'm a dorkhead. I love Big Japan more than ANYBODY should and was WAAAY too stoked when we got the four different episodes simultaneously from LOREFICE and Billy and I ALWAYS have to watch the Big Japan immediately. I mean, HELL!- it's WEIRD!

Shadow VII vs. Zumbido:

Zumbido is totally king-sized as he isn't afraid to just DIE hitting a half dozen witheringly hurty Lucha Big Money Bump Highspots in front of four hundred seedy Big Japan Vampire fans. Shadow VII (HEY! I've seen his brother, Shadow V, where are the other five Shadows?) is deeply into being the Japanese equivalent of Karloff LaGarde Jr- he's unabashedly unspectacular and his sole function is to be landed upon without hurting the knee of the luchadore about to crush him. The fact that he is dressed like Mr Pogo doesn't really reveal what a very, very okay worker that he is. He does a nice over-the-shoulder armdrag. Zumbido does all the high-stress stuff, hitting a fabulous Moonsault and a positively SUPER-ASTROESQUE over-the-top-rope Somersault Senton to the floor. Zumbido also hit the truly SWANK Full Extension, Leg-Assisted Violencia bump that needs 2 B seen 2 B B-lieved. Shadow VII gets the ironic win with the world's most Tenryu-like powerbomb. Zumbido is more fun than all heck.

Aya Koyama/ Neftaly vs Miho Kawasaki/ Nana Fujimura:

Neftaly does a nice tope in this. I'm guessing she trained either Kawasaki or Fujimura because one of them was all Lucha-intensive for a second there. This wasn't long enough to hate. Kinda

sloppy but nothing to turn my stomach and this seemed like three rookies and unfortunately dressed lady luchadore well after the bloom is off the rose. This didn't suck, so more power to them, I say.

Tomoaki Honma vs Gennosuke Kobayashi:

The more I see Honma the more I like him and this is a cool little match if you are WAY too into Japanese indie stylings. It's a weird clash because the clash between these two's styles ISN'T as harrowing as one would think: Honma is a hard-kicking BattlARTS-style matboy who is prone to goofy flights of fancy into the realm of upper echelon Lucha highspots; Kobayashi is a Kendo Nagasaki trainee so he is really US Pro-style based- as are most of the Big Japan trainees (and I think that will be a strong point for these guys when they develop into wrestlers of note, because they start off psychologically sound.) Honma works super stiff at the beginning and goes through a series of super neat submissions. Kobayashi counters with his US Pro-style offense and they then meet in the middle as the start to mesh the common ground of their styles: the BattlARTS-style boys can run the ropes and hit highspots, the Big Japan weirdos can sell and work stiff. After Honma finally succumbs to his secret lucha leanings and hits a big old toprope Sunset Flip, Kobayashi feels the shooter in him emerge as he does a super nasty released German onto Honma's shoulder. Eventually Honma's submission attempts pay off, but this was so NOT a shootstyle match. This was a whole bunch of styles wadded up into one. And it worked for the most part.

Kishin Kawabata vs Ryushi Yamakawa:

Yamakawa continues his retirement from an early wheelchair as he continues to wrestle in some of the best Mid-Atlantic Championship Wrestling matches of 1998. Big Japan is freakin weird. THERE! beneath the torn and bleeding exterior of the rookie death match sensation- Ryushi Yamakawa- lurks..... DON KERNODLE! This was Don Kernodle vs Steve Muzlin but five times stiffer. But the wrestling was just as vanilla, and it was also as psychologically sound, so I was sufficiently into this because I love that style when done right and this was good basic US Pro style wrestling. Yamakawa sells really well for a guy who has been powerbombed off a scaffold onto an unbreakable table before. Kawabata is a WAR heavyweight wannabe. HAHAHA! Oh I kid the Kishinator! He's got your basic batch of Japanese midcard heavyweight powermoves and they both aren't afraid to work stiff as all hell in this. They spend the first five minutes head-butting each other a whole bunch and they stop it before it gets annoying and they go into a bunch of moves on the mat and then Kawabata beats the holy bejeebees out of Yamakawa with a chair. This was pretty good but too clipped. Kawabata wins with the Lumpiest La Majistral in the pantry. For Hardcores only.

Yoshihiro Tajiri/ Minoru Fujita vs Masayoshi Motegi/ Makoto Saito:

HEY! It's the Mr Ferly of Japanese Wrestling, the astoundingly Mediocre To Good Masayoshi Motegi! You forget how cool Tajiri is until you see him in a match like this where he synthesizes Lucha and Shootstyle elements so seamlessly as he takes Eternal Victim Motegi to the mat. Makoto Saito is one of my favorite Big Japan Junior punks because he seems like a legitimately seedy punkass bastard. He kicks really hard and he punches the waiflike Minoru Fujita right in the head. He and Tajiri kick each other real hard for a little while until Tajiri gets all freaky with

the Shootlucha as he hits a weird ass roll up to swing big mo towards he and his emaciated partner. Motegi eventually gets in and stinks up the place on the way to hitting a really nice Nodawa as the Babe Laufenberg of Puroresu can't kill the forty pound lil dynamo called Fujita. Finally, Tajiri begins mурdalizing Saito with two SWANK Spinning Doctor Bombs and then makes him submit to the dopiest lucha submission ever to grace the shores of Japan. Motegi isn't good and he isn't really bad, but it he wasn't good in this match and he was enough to make this quite not overly good. Plus not enough of Tajiri and Saito. Yeah. Okay.

Kendo Nagasaki/ Yuichi Taniguchi vs. Takashi Ishikawa/ Shunme Matsuzaki:

This took a few minutes to really suck. The really old guys- Nagasaki and Ishikawa- didn't blow-up completely until about eight minutes in so they did some mat wrestling that was straight out of the Nelson Royal playbook. The young guys- Matsuzaki and Taniguchi- didn't start blowing endless spots until about the nine minute mark. But when the Whip of Suck came down on these four, noone was spared, including the viewer. Not stomach-churning or infuriating but definately not good.

Great Pogo/ Shadow V vs. Great Nakamaki/ Great Kojika (Dry Ice Casket Death Match):

Hey, here's the match that pays Big Japan's bills for this show and keeps their name mentioned by creepy guys at indie shows all over the US. Boy, this wasn't good at all. There are certain criteria that have to be met to achieve the state of Good Garbage Match: YOU must have one guy who will die and die and die in an attempt to top Cactus Jack in 1995's King Of The Death Match Tournament. Big Japan has one guy who was crazy as Cactus Jack when it came to bumps that NOONE with a functional brainstem would try, and that was Yamakawa and he's in the undercard now, participating in legitimate wrestling matches that are infinitely more interesting than this industrial load of crap. The most they can muster is Nakamaki, who bleeds a lot. But Big Fucking Deal, I-I-I can bleed a lot, just let me carve the turkey at Thanksgiving. Blood without wrestling is as horrible as Dynamic Charismatic MicWork without wrestling- it replaces something cool instead of delivers something cool. YOU must have something dangerous involved. Fire, barbed-wire, scaffolds, cages, chairs- these are good in the right hands. DRY ICE? Mr Pogo actually picks some up and tries to make Kojika eat it. This is about as dangerous as a Barefoot- Stub Your Toe Match or a Brush Your Teeth And Immediately Drink Orance Juice Match: the team with the highest threshhold for being annoyed WINS! Pogo's router bits on his drill is a weak replacement for something cool like big bump or some decent ass-stomping. This delivered nothing and really really sucked. A lame ending to fair little tape.

!@!@!@!@!@!@!ATHENA: THE SPIRITS OF LADIES SPORTS: ALL JAPAN WOMEN TV
8/23/98.

(byRAY DUFFY)

The funny thing about AJW is the fact despite the fact they're supposedly in financial ruin, they've got plenty of money to spend on studio sets and opening credits. The new open is now of a space fighter flying into a carrier, a woman hopping out and flying off on a rocket board into an arena. Yet the still have the rattiest ring cover ever.

Zap I vs Miho Wakizawa:

(Gran Prix Semi Final #1) Miho jumps I at the bell and takes it to the floor. ZAP takes control with chair shots. It seems to be pretty back and forth. Z-I uses the kendo stick a whole bunch. Wakizawa gets double stomped a whole bunch. Maekawa interferes at one point on put it's not enough. Z-I wins.

Yumiko Hotta vs Manascreami Toyota:

(Semi Final #2) This is also clipped. They do a segment where they both palm thrust each other, Hotta however, breaks it up with headbutts that are just awesome because you can hear the dull thud of skull meeting skull. Toyota starts doing a bunch of suplexes, she goes for the Japanese Ocean Cyclone suplex, but Hotta turns it into a cross arm breaker, but Toyota keeps it blocked, rolls it over into a jackknife hold and to get the win.

ZAP-I vs Manascreami Toyota:

Z-I tries to use the stick early, but fails. Toyota gets attacked by ZAP-W which sets up Z-I using a chain on her and more or less giving her a spanking with the stick. I guess she's now a member of the Zeta Sorority. Z-I hits a nice second rope spring turn around somersault senton. There's a bunch of stick work and interference by ZAP, including a duel caning spot. I guess she's not in the Zeta Sorority, they don't take whiners. After a whole bunch of ZAP double teaming, Maekawa interferes on Toyota's behalf so Manami can do her springboard plancha. Watching Toyota do these is like watching Evel Knievel jump buses. You know it's only a matter of time before she crashes and burns. Manami takes control, goes for a pin, Z-W interferes and goes stick crazy, including a whack to the ass of the referee, accidentally hits Z-I in the head leading to Manami's straitjacket suplex for the win.

The Secret Stories- Takao Inoue, Cuty Suzuki, Hikari Fukuoka, Kanako Motoya, Jaguar Yokota, Yuko Kosugi, Chiharu and Yasha Kurenai:

In the last few shows, AJW has a segment where they have a bunch of women on a panel and ask them a bunch of questions. What most of these women have in common is that they've all done a bunch of nude/semi-nude spreads, except for Kurenai who's there plugging a movie that she appears in, which also has an appearance by Yoshiaki Fujiwara. Apparently, Jag's the life of the panel. Takako has a picture with her crotch sticking out (and covered with a dot) which is subject of a conversation. One of the many segments I will have to probably go back and review once I stop being lazy and learn Japanese. They do a segment where they do promo stuff for L-1 and the Jr. All Stars Show. They also do a segment with Yoshimi Asada and Haruka Nishimoto, the two girls who wear little tops and lean forward before each ad break (the Athena girls, I guess) do a segment calling "Looking for the Athena" which I guess is them doing visits to well known women's athletes, in this case, it's to a Tae Kwon Do Dojang to visit Minako Hatekeyama, who was on the national Tae Kwon Do team in Japan in the 70's I think. They take a class. The sad part is, after one class they kick stiffer than most of the WCW Heavyweights.

Manascreami Toyota vs Shinobu Kandori:

(WWWA Title match) At the bell, Toyota offers a handshake and uses it to get Kandori in a sleeper. Toyota goes all highflying with limited success. Toyota hits a few palm thrusts and it's Kandori down! Kandori down! Of course, she's just playing as she sells like she's hurt until the 8 count and then pops up fresh as a daisy, which was pretty funny. Toyota hits her springboard trip while you do it plancha and a top rope drop kick and then a moonsault for a two. Toyota goes for the Ocean Cyclone, Kandori blocks it and does the rolling cradle. Apparently she's developed a sense of humor. Toyota gets in control again, Kandori gets all shoot style going for arm bars, Toyota counters with a figure four. Kandori gets in control, gets Toyota down and punches her, puts her in the spinning sleeper. Toyota gets in and counters a move with a rolling cradle which looks real bad since you can see Kandori pushing along to help the cradle continue rolling. Toyota does a moonsault that eats boots and Kandori hits a la majistral and then locks in a Teioh Lock, which Toyota rope saves out of. Kandori with a powerbomb for a two. Toyota hits a sunset flip out of a powerbomb attempt, tries a running move but gets nailed with a clothesline. Toyota hits a tiger suplex for two. She goes for her straight jacket though the legs suplex, but Kandori blocks it and drops her with some palm thrusts. Kandori goes for the cross arm breaker, Toyota almost escapes, but Kandori reverses again and Toyota has to rope break. Toyota tries to do a springboard into a sunset flip, but totally screws it up. Kandori has her with another cross armbreaker, which Toyota blocks. Kandori sent to the floor, top rope drop kick to the floor followed by a trip on the top rope somersault senton onto an unbreakable table by Toyota. Toyota with the Ocean Cyclone for 2. She goes for it again, Kandori cross arm breakers out of it, Toyota counters with the move she beat Hotta with, but Kandori escapes. Straight Jacket through the legs suplex for two. Toyota goes for the Ocean Cyclone again, Kandori victory rolls out into a cross arm breaker/leg lock type thing for the win. An ok match, mostly for the humor of Kandori doing moves you won't expect her to do. I still don't understand how people can say Toyota is the greatest women's wrestler ever as she's real sloppy. How people can praise her and pan Sabu is beyond me. They're in the same boat.

OZ ACADEMY SPECIAL 6/21/98

(byDEAN RASMUSSEN)- This is the tape of the show that Mayumi Ozaki's renegade promotion ran with wads of help from GAEA and JWP. God Bless Glenn. The first twenty minutes is a whole lot of yakking and highlights and history n crap.

Mayumi Ozaki vs Bad Nurse Nakamura:

Rie Nakamura is doing her Bad Nurse Nakamura gimmick again these days and since she is an FMW ex-patriot who epitomized the Redneck Queen Ass-kicker ethic that she and Miwa Sato perfected while knee-deep in the sketchiness of the FMW Women's division as the second tier past the divine Kudo and the semi-divine Combat Toyoda, I was all receptive to her arrival as a GAEA regular. OOPS! I forgot! She's not very good. OZ drags her to a watchable match and instills some actual psychology and tries to stabilize the frazzled, scared, and outclassed former victim of assorted barbed-wire and fire assaults. Barbed-wire is easy. Good wrestling matches are hard. Mayumi Ozaki can do both type of matches better than most anyone on earth and I contend that Oz is THE best at Death Matches in the world. But it's Bad Nurse Nakamura, not Megumi Kudo. Might as well set your sites a little lower.

Sugar Sato vs Dynamite Kansai:

This match sucked. Kansai is quite problematic. If she is in with Aja, Hotta, Lioness, Ozaki, Hokuto or Chigusa, she knows how to react: sell like a professional wrestler. When in with anybody else, she sells like MENG if Meng felt guilty about no-selling. In this match, she is totally baffled as to how to sell for Sugar. "Is Sugar bigtime now? She's only in her second year? Is she the second coming of Sakie Hasegawa or a glorified Cutie Suzuki? Ah, she's a lot prettier than me, I'll sell like she's Tanny Mouse..." is what was going through Dynamite's pretty little head. Sugar didn't help by blowing tons of stuff and kicking like a pansy for WHATEVER reason. It's farking DYNAMITE KANSAL, for God's sake. She'd kick YOU really hard. BOY! This was All around ungood.

Chikayo Nagashima/ Reiko Amano vs Toshie Uematsu/ Sonoko Kato:

This match fucking ROCKED. When did Reiko Amano become so awesome? She is absolutely FRENETIC in this match as she flies from ungodly angles and hits the coolest tricked-out submissions on earth- which she tops off with the Tope Of The Month. Toshie Uematsu is definately back from the chasm of injury and self-doubt. She is the main reason that this match worked because they set it all up early as Toshie Uematsu plays to both of her opponents strengths- going to the mat with Amano like a motha fukka and then taking it straight to Arena Mexico with Chikayo Nagashima. Welcome to a wad of versatility, courtesy of the no-longer slumping Toshie Uematsu. The other big story is the seething rage betwixt Amano and fellow-shootstyle-gimmicked-and-sudden-hotty Sonoko Kato- as this is just as fun-filled as Meiko Satomura hating the living hell out of Sugar Sato and Sugar being a real bitch about the whole thing. This is why Inter-promotional is GOOD. These two should definately get the chance to kick the hell out of each other in a singles match before too long. They roll out of the cool mid-section of total Hatred and Submissions and go Full-Goose All Japan Women 1993 for the superfun extended finish. Luckily the formula for the finishes is endless saves as opposed to endless kick outs and they did some REALLY tricky and intricate sequences which gave a lot of good Lucha matches a run for the money. Needless to say, this was pretty fucking stiff; what NEEDS to be said is that almost all of the class of Satomura, Sugar and Uematsu are quickly arriving because I'd put this match up against anything else I've seen this year and it wouldn't pale to anything. YOU WANT ALLLLLL THIS. (AND When did Sonoko Kato become the new Mima Shimoda in terms of being an ass-kicking Supervixen. Our lil punkin has blossomed into quite the Russ Meyeresque spine-snapper. Golly! She went from being cuddly to being ALL THAT! WOO-HOO!)

Kyoko Inoue/ Rie Tamada vs Sugar Sato/ Mayumi Ozaki:

Kyoko Inoue has decided that the Toyota method of the aging highflyer is undignified so she has actually started to transform into something within her giant weight range- so she is become a hardass and more dangerous wresler. She picks her spots now (I still can't get over the table spot from the Lioness/Kyoko match. That was a Whole Lotta Rosie going through a table on the floor from the top turnbuckle. Ya gotta love will to pull THAT off. Maybe Kyoko rules the goddam earth afterall.) Rie Tamada is all flippy and tricky and stuff, but she hasn't totally broken out into the shining light of awesomeness in NeoLadies like her former partner over in ArSION- Yumi

Fukawa. Fukawa wasn't afraid to bring out the fact that she can really kick folk's asses as opposed to just being the brightest star in Japanese Schoolgirl fetish Midnight Choker constellation. Sugar Sato blows big batches of stuff and Kyoko is too big for Sugar to work with. Oz tries to turn this into something but this turns to poo. Get this tape for the one tag match because that DOES truly rule it like a motherfacka.

\$%\$%\$%\$%\$%\$ BIG JAPAN-5/1/98.
(byDEAN RASMUSSEN)

Bufalo Salvaje vs. Tadahiro Fujisaki;

Bufalo has a horse on his mask. He's your basic luchadore trying to do stuff with a scrub who has no idea how to work the style. He does a nice Senton to the floor. Salvaje actually gets in some neat goofyball lucha matwork and comes off as a poorman's Dos Caras- which isn't bad at all for Big Japan.

Yuichi Yaniguchi/ Gennosuke Kobayashi vs. Masayoshi Motegi/ Makato Saito:

Hey! Gennosuke Kobayashi is starting to grow on me. He's the guy in Big Japan with the thermos and he isn't afraid to really not hurt you because he ain't afraid to work and he's all whimsical and shit doing his powermoves. Motegi ain't gonna leave me alone this month but luckily he's leaning towards Good in this and it's also clipped straight to hell. Yaniguchi is one of those really fat guys in Big Japan and he does the tope onto Motegi that looked like a Buick Skylark being driven off a cliff. Saito is really cool but is pretty much here so that the big star Motegi doesn't do the job and kill all of his blazingly white hot heat. More Saito already. And less Motegi. KAY? The Kobayashi push CONTINUES!

Ryuji Yamakawa/ Tomoaki Honma vs. Mamoru Okamoto/ Mach Junji:

This was TOO all kinds of cool to be as hacked up as it was. Okamoto is the COOLEST. He's from BattlARTS and he's WAAY not afraid to kick you right in the face. He wears tiny red pants. Okamoto and Mr WhompAss Honma trade some weak kicks to set up Honma's Royce Gracie Brazilian Tope Con Hilo that was- HELL!- pretty fucking spectacular. Mach Junji goes all highflying with a pescado as the shooters go all lucha on our asses. Yamakawa enters the fray with Run-Up-The-Ropes Plancha that leads to a bunch of wrestling by the former Deathmatch superstar. God, I bet Nakamaki wishes he could hit a Butterfly Suplex Facebuster as cool as the one Yamakawa kills Mach Junji with. Why was this clipped all to hell when...

Aya Koyama/ Miho Kawasaki/ Neftaly vs. Miho Wakizawa/ Kayo Noumi/ Noriko Toyota:

... they show every second of THIS? Neftaly is an aging luchadore and she looks like she was probably quite the looker back in the day. She's wearing the same way revealing clothes forty pounds later. It's disturbing. It's like seeing one of my aunts in a Xena- Warrior Princess get-up. Uhuhuhuhuh..... I'll have bad dreams. I have no idea who the rest of these youngsters are but they seem to be having a good time as they lightheartedly smile after blowing something, so they all seem lovable enough. Definately looked like it was more fun to do than to watch. This goes on about 75 minutes according to the clock in my mind.

Katsumi Usuda vs. Minoru Fujita

Usuda is the COOLEST. He's from BattlARTS and he's not afraid to kick you right in the face. Fujita is scrawny and is custombuilt for the ass-kicking that ensues. The first part of the match is Usuda twisting Fujita's spindly legs which moves the match quite smoothly into Usuda kicking Fujita in the face REALLY hard for a while. Fujita does this weird submission hold where he drapes Usuda over the ropes while Fujita pulls on his head and his ankles. They then do a foray into highspots as Fujita gets a couple of topes in. When they hit the ring Usuda and Fujita take it to the mat and Usuda is a pro- he makes Fujita- who would be a dead ringer for Kanemoru if they could ever get Kanemoru off the gas- look credible and threatening on the mat. After establishing that Fujita is good on the mat by setting up Fujita's assorted submission spots, Usuda says, "Minoru. You must come to me. You must recieve your ass-whippin'." Usuda starts beating the shit out of the spunky 87 pounder and hits a Urican and the end would seem logical now as a dead Fujita stumbles about on his feet after a nine count- BUT NO! That's the beauty of BattlARTS! There's always the pro style twist. Fujita hits a nasty German suplex after Usuda misses a roundhouse kick to finish Fujita off. After some nearfalls and nifty triple submission combo (Fujiwara armbar into wristlock into cross armbreaker), Usuda goes for another roundhouse kick to finally kill his emaciated nemesis and misses again. Fujita hits another German but Usuda yamazakis it into a wristlock for the submission. This was good despite the fact that it didn't ever hit the Good BattlARTS Match level of insane kicks and blood-curdling stiffness. Still- Usuda did his job, he made Fujita look really good before putting him away and Fujita did his job which was to stand there and get kicked really hard in the face so I could watch.

Koji Kitao/ Isao Takagi/ Osamu Tachihakari/ Tatsumi Kitihara vs. Kendo Nagasaki/ Kishin Kawabata/ Shunme Matsuzaki/ Daikokubo Benkei:

Oh MAN! A RASMUSSEN DREAM MATCH! The Lumpy War Heavyweights INVADE!! They must have heard that it was All-You-Can-Eat-Ribs night at Big Japan! Tachihakari has never been lumpier! Benkei has never been slower! Kendo Nagasaki has never been more out-of-it! Kitoa has never been more a lumbering fatboy! Takagi even I-I-I don't recognize! So this, of course, RULED. For one main reason- Tatsumi Kitahara is involved and he rules it harder than hell. The fatboys from WAR start busting up Shunme (beatme payme) Matsuzaki and- when Kitahara gets in- giants doses of pain ensues as Kitahara starts in with the kicking to the face and shoulders and stomach and punching and the hurting and the HEYHEYHEY! Kitahara eventually comically SELLS for the horrible Kendo Nagasaki and the EVEN MORE HORRIBLE Daikokubo Benkei and this match FINALLY starts blowing goats like you new it would. Kishin Kawabata- the only wrestler on his side who doesn't actually suck- sells for the horrible Koji Kitoa and then tries to make sense of the lethargic and baffling "offense" of Osamu Tachihakari- the pock-marked Romeo that puts the Romance in Wrestle and Romance. This turns into the most listless donniebrook in the history of listlessness as they all kinda mill around kicking each other- and if watch it in regular speed you will laugh out loud as Tachihakari goes as gently ballistic as a lumbering galoot can go. Koji gets the pin with a Michinoku Driver Number two- the only move they have in common. You need to see this. Well, maybe YOU don't.

HEY! Matsunaga isn't afraid to rip his flesh to shreds diving into a trampoline of barbed-wire for the viewing amusement of the audience. This was too much walking around to be good and some of the big spots were too clunky to be GARBAGE WRESTLING GOODNESS. They ones that worked were the ones involving the fluorescent lights, the somersault senton into the barbed wire trampoline by Matsunaga after Shadow WX gets powerbombed into it, and the truly dippy Superbomb by Matsunaga and Jason the Terrible of Shadow Winger onto the cactus that was laid across the Bed O Nails. Everything else sucked. FMW did these things a whole lot better because they tended to put a semblance of wrestling into it instead of the tedious weak brawling and endless walking between spots. And let's face it, it ain't gonna be Cactus Jack falling off a ladder onto barbed-wire. These were just guys pretending to be wrestlers, not a true test of willpower like a really cool garbage match. I've seen loads better garbage matches than this and it didn't require as much crap strewn all over the arena. Whatever happened to two men, some fire, a few spools of barbed-wire and a desire to stick it all in a good blood-soaked brawl. Why make it so CREEPY?

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\$\$\$\$\$ the phat ass love-engulfed SINGLES GOING STEADY! \$\$\$\$\$\$

[illegible]

@@@@@@@@@@@@@ Hulk Hogan vs. Antonio Inoki-NEW JAPAN PRO WRESTLING 6/2/83: (SCHNEIDER)-This was the finals of the first IWGP tournament and one of the most influential matches in wrestling history, it also sucked, but hey it's Hulk Hogan and Antonio Inoki- 1 + 1 = 2. Hogan is only slightly balding and not nearly as gassed as his is now, he also has just a healthy tan, not the now familiar sickly pumpkin orange glow. Inoki doesn't look as fossilized as he looks now either. The match had a lot of classic Hulkster mat wrestling, you remember- the drop toehold, and the hammerlock into the headlock, that he would bust out every six months against Adrian Adonis, to break the punch, punch, big foot, legdrop monotony. They do a knucklelock sequence which Inoki breaks by kicking Hogan in his shriveled, steroid-ravaged testicles. Hogan hits his running elbow (which was his finisher back then) and Inoki basically no-sells it. Inoki hits his ziguri and Hogan nosells that, dropping this match from mere mediocrity to total shit. Hogan also hits a jumping knee which was so loose it made his butt brother Bruti's look positively Tsurutian in comparison. They go to the outside and do some lame brawling, with Hogan getting in the ring first, Inoki gets up on the apron and Hogan hits him with a clothesline. Inoki falls off the apron badly hitting his head and knocking him silly. This changes the planned finish of the match (which was Inoki going over) and gives Hogan the title. This was the Hulksters first big win and leads to a push in the AWA, which of course leads to ...Hillbilly Jim, Mr. T, Hulk Hogan's rock and wrestling cartoon show, The Helmet with the fist, The Match and the Movie, identical twin referees, the Piledriver album, Mean Gene Okerland in the ring, Hogan beating the newly Iraqi Sgt. Slaughter, Yokozuna's four minute title reign, Mr. Nanny, The Giant falling off the roof, The Renegade, Zodiac v. Hogan headlining Starcade, Mr. T again, The Plot to Destroy Hulkamania, Ze Gangsta and Jeep Swenson, Loch Ness, Hogan beats up the entire

Dungeon of Doom, The retirement of Ric Flair, "Where am I dude? There are no Hulkamaniacs here", Dave Sullivan, Hacksaw Jim Duggan U.S. champ, the reviving elbow drop, Age in a cage, Vincent, NWO Hollywood, Hogan slapjacks the entire War Games, the mist of death, Jay Leno and all the other horribleness Terry Bollea has infected the sport we love with. If Inoki knew how to fall correctly we may have been spared the Hulksters ebola like influence in the sport of wrestling. Ahh the vagaries of fate

Dan Severn v Ken Shamrock, UFC 9, Detroit, MI:

(NAIMARK)- Wrestling fans often confront me with the same accusation: "Hey Mike, how can you say that you're a knowledgeable no-holds-barred fan, yet refuse to recognize the gladiatorial brilliance of WWF Superstars Ken Shamrock and Dan Severn?". Well, maybe they don't say THAT exactly, but since my mom might read this some day, I'll refrain from using the language of the thin-skinned Severn-heads and Sham-rockers. In the past, I've explained at great length why I don't consider either of these men to be anywhere near the elite level of international NHB. In the future, I'll just insist that they watch this match from UFC9. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then this 20 minutes of videotape is the equivalent of the combined circulations of the New York Times and Sports Illustrated, all bearing the same headline: "You Guys Stink!" Here's the setup for this historic confrontation. Dan Severn, a multiple-time amateur wrestling champion in the mid-1980s, made his no-holds-barred debut in UFC4, where he was submitted by the Brazilian JiuJitsu wizard, Royce Gracie, in a brilliant match which saw the much smaller Gracie frustrate Severn by using his JiuJitsu "guard" (a defensive position where you fight from your back with your opponent's hips between your legs) to keep Severn off-balance and ultimately choke him out.. Gracie's win was his third UFC championship without a loss, and for the next UFC show, Gracie was bumped up to "Superfight" status, with only one match instead of being part of the 8-man tournament. His opponent for UFC was none other than Ken Shamrock, whom Gracie submitted in a flash in UFC1. What had Shamrock done to deserve such a high- profile rematch? According to former UFC promoter Art Davie, Shamrock had big muscles and looked like a fighter, so he got the nod. So come UFC5, Severn rolled his way to his first and most impressive UFC title, defeating future champion Oleg Taktarov on his way to victory. Shamrock took advantage of his "Superfight" status by laying on top of Royce Gracie for a staggering 30 minutes without attempting even one submission, lest the 180lb Gracie make him squeal again. The match was ruled a draw to a chorus of boos. UFC6 followed with a "Superfight" between Shamrock and Severn. Severn complained of a fever prior to the match, but true to form, he gave it his all in the Octagon. Shamrock caught Severn diving for a double-leg takedown and clamped on a guillotine choke which caused Severn to tap at around the 2 minute mark. Shamrock was now declared the UFC "Superfight" champion, and went on to defend his title at UFC7 against Oleg Taktarov (draw) and at UFC8 against Kimo (submission via kneebar) before the rematch against Severn in Severn's own backyard of Michigan. The fans were clearly rabid Severn partisans who wanted to see their local hero avenge his loss to Ken Shamrock. Here's what they got to see instead. As the fight starts, Shamrock and Severn approach the center of the ring and adopt their fighting stance. Shamrock carries his hands high, muay-thai style, while Severn keeps his fists open, palms facing each other. Now to accurately understand what happens here, I'll need some audience participation. Stand facing the computer monitor. Now take a step 45 degrees to your left, and turn so that you are still

facing the monitor. Take another step 45 degrees to your left and again turn to face what should now be the side of your monitor. Now repeat this for 10 minutes. That's the Shamrock v Severn match at UFC9. Thrilling, ain't it? Two purported "elite" fighters, one a "submissions expert", the other a grappling specialist, both so scared of the striking skills of the other that they refused to even engage! Two of the worst strikers in NHB, paralyzed by their own uncertainty and inadequacies into doing absolutely NOTHING for 10 minutes. Finally, Severn manages to take Shamrock down with a sloppy double-leg as time expires for the match. A 3-minute overtime follows, and to the amazement of nobody, continues along the same dull and listless path of circling. With about a minute left in overtime, Severn shoots in and takes Shamrock down again and immediately begins flurrying with weak chopping right hands to Shamrock's face (make a fist and pound it on the table, judge-style. That's the way Severn punches. This is NOT proper striking technique once you finish elementary school). In this exchange, Severn inadvertently pokes Shamrock in his eye, which swells it nastily until it is nearly closed when the final bell rings to a chorus of boos. So here's the judge's conundrum; this was a fight with very little actual *fighting*, and a whole lot of running and hiding. In typically American fashion, the judges decide that since Severn was on top of Shamrock more than Shamrock was on top of Severn, Severn must've won the fight. And so, Severn wins a judges decision, but despite his status as the hometown boy, the crowd isn't impressed. Neither was I. And you wouldn't be either, dear reader, if some maniacal fiend strapped you to a seat in a movie theatre and forced you to watch this pathetic display of pseudo-fighting, a la the Ludvigian Technique popularized by the immortal cinema classic, Anthony Burgess' A Clockwork Orange. Believe me kids, rent THAT movie instead of watching Slappy Severn and Ken "The Sham" go through the motions in what may well be the worst NHB fight ever broadcast. When you see Alex DeLarge and his three Droogs (that being Pete, Georgie, and Dim, Dim being dim) get ready to scrap with knotty rockers or shiv or chain, you know some malcheck is going to get tolchoked on the gulliver. Because if you want to viddy some ultra-violence, you won't find it in Severn v Shamrock II. You won't even find any decent fighting. Right right? Right right.

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ (I WON A COINTOSS WITH PHIL RIPPA AND NOW I GET TO REVIEW)
Jumbo Tsuruta vs Greg Gagne, ALL JAPAN CLASSICS #6- sometime after the sideburns and before the tie-dye tiny pants. Big John Williams the Left Coast Ladies' Man is figuring 1984; ALL JAPAN: (RASMUSSEN)- Chapter 1: Jumbo Tsuruta looks across the ring and says, "Joe (the ref), what the hell's going on here? Are WE wrestling or something? Why is that Insurance salesman taking off his shirt? These guys are getting irritating in the lengths they will take to get me to buy term life-insurance. I tell them that Baba's taking care of me with the 401K and the All Japan stock-options and everything." Joe says, "No, Jumbo, THAT'S Verne Gagne's boy! He's your opponent." Jumbo retorts, "MAN, those gaijin bastards at the AWA office MAKE ME SICK! They think JUST BECAUSE I'M JAPANESE that I gotta be five foot three. Jesus Christ, I'm a kill this little bastard dead as living hell. Those idiots..." Joe looks at the Japanese legend with Those Joe Eyes Of Reason. "C'mon, Jumbo. He's supposed to be a real player in the AWA and he's gonna carry them through the next millenium. We'd better make him look good so we can make him a credible challenger for the Triple Crown for when he becomes a huge international star. Maybe he'll bring over Jake the Milkman Milligan for the Real World Tag Tourney. I hear he's another up-and-comer." The affable Jumbo sighs that lovable sigh of legendary

company-manness. "Alright Joe. I'll let him live this time. But after this match, I want you to promote Kikuchi to the six-man matches so I can beat the living soup out of him for rest of his pathetic existence." Joe laughs heartily. "You GOT IT, Jumbo." Chapter 2: Jumbo Tsuruta and Joe the Ref enter the Circuit City- the loud and garish display of electromultimedialove being a total affront to the legendary wrestler's stoic nature. "Hey, I wonder if I should get one of these here Digital Video Players." Joe smiles to himself and retorts, "Jumbo, you came in here to get a walkman so you can listen to your Kiss CDs while you run. I'm here to keep you from buying something stupid. Remember that Beta Player fiasco?" Jumbo laughed his hearty laugh. Meanwhile, as the two chums are chatting, a sharp, shark-like Circuit City Senior Associate takes off his shirt and greets the two Japanese visitors. "Hi, I'm Greg. Can I help you with anything? Here, why don't we lock up in a Greco Roman knuckle-lock." Jumbo glances out of the side of his eyes and cuts direct to an equally suspicious Joe. "Actually, I was looking for a Walkman that plays CDs." Jumbo's gargantuan hands engulf the puny hands of the Circuit City Salesman of the Month June, 1986. Greg the salesman arches backwards from the power of Jumbo. "Well, HERE'S a good solid model. It's a Sony. It's an OFFICIAL "Walkman"- the original. You gotta go with the original innovator, right?" Greg attempts to power up. Jumbo crushes him back to the arch. "Well, I'm just gonna be using it when I do roadwork, which is a couple of times a week so it's not a real big deal. You got anything a little cheaper?" Greg squirms from the reenforcement of Jumbo's massive power advantage. "CHEAPER? CHEAPER? You're Jumbo Tsuruta! You're the CHAMP! You're an idol AROUND THE WORLD, am I right?" Miraculously, Greg powers up as Jumbo nods in baffled agreement. "You got an image to keep up. You NEED this Walkman AND this Panasonic BOOMBOX. The kids will think you're even GINCHIER than they do now. Your boss is gonna want you to make sure that your fans think that everything having to do with you and your company is absolutely TOPDRAWER FROM THE GET-GO, RIGHT?" Jumbo is in the arch as the puny Associate Gagne begins dominating the test of strength. Jumbo can only nod in agreement. Greg, feeling the deal about to close, feels the WILD urge to take a big risk. "And since this will be a considerable investment in YOUR future quality entertainment, you HAVE to get this extended warranty." Jumbo's eyes quickly snap out of the sales trance that Greg Gagne had him in and he looks over to understanding and smiling face of Joe the ref. Joe the ref looks to Gagne- who has the look on his face of a man has just accidentally cursed in front of his grandmother. "Take this home, Jumbo. We gotta get back. Rusher Kimura's cookout starts in forty-five minutes." Jumbo gets to his feet and looks at Greg. "We'll take this Goldstar. Hey, it's only 19.95!" He then powerslams the diminutive Loman-like Gagne into the Graphic Equalizer display- killing the pasty heir to the Verne Gagne legacy dead as living hell- and the two old friends head to the cash register. An inquisitive Joe cocks a stare at Jumbo Tsuruta, his old friend and also his Triple Crown Champion. "You got Love Gun on CD? We should get that too." Jumbo laughs. "Joe. You are wild...."

NEXT WEEK: SOME JWP! JWP! AND MORE JWP! GAEA! NEW JAPAN! EMI~! IWA! BIG JAPAN! HOPEFULLY THAT RINGS MATCH THAT ALL THE BEDWETTERS ARE TINKLING ABOUT! WOO-HOO!

DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

It's just a fairy tale- and I don't believe in magic anymore, Jean.
-Billy Bragg.